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## B. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for assessing employee compensation, said method comprising:  
receiving planning factor data from a user, the planning factor data corresponding to one or more employees and the planning factor data including compensation planning data;  
storing the planning factor data in employee profile data areas, wherein each employee profile data area corresponds to one of the employees;  
retrieving actual employment data for each of the employees, the actual employment data including employee contribution data and actual compensation data; [[and]]  
analyzing the compensation planning data corresponding to one or more employees using the contribution data corresponding to one or more employees[.];  
selecting a group of employees;  
calculating an aggregate compensation for the group;  
retrieving budget data corresponding to the group;  
determining a variance between the aggregate compensation and the budget data;  
selecting one of the employees from the group;  
revising compensation planning data corresponding to the selected employee;  
in response to revising compensation planning data corresponding to the selected employee, calculating a second aggregate compensation for the group; and  
determining a second variance between the second aggregate compensation and the budget data.

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2. (Currently Amended) The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:  
identifying high contributing employees by analyzing employee performance data included in an employee profile data area corresponding to each employee;  
determining whether the planning factor data corresponding to the high contributing employees is accurate; and revising the planning factor data in response to the determination.
3. (Original) The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:  
identifying an employee classification corresponding to one of the employees;  
retrieving benchmark compensation data from a nonvolatile storage device corresponding to the identified employee classification; and  
comparing the retrieved benchmark compensation with actual compensation data corresponding to the employee.
4. (Original) The method as described in claim 3 wherein the benchmark compensation data is selected from a group consisting of regional compensation data and organizational compensation data.
5. (Cancelled)
6. (Cancelled)
7. (Original) The method as described in claim 1 wherein the compensation planning data includes one or more from the group consisting of a salary amount, a stock option amount, and an award amount.

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8. (Currently Amended) An information handling system comprising:  
one or more processors;  
a memory accessible by the processors;  
one or more nonvolatile storage devices accessible by the processors; and  
a compensation analysis tool to analyze employee compensation, the compensation analysis tool including:  
means for receiving planning factor data from a user, the planning factor data corresponding to one or more employees and the planning factor data including compensation planning data;  
means for storing the planning factor data in employee profile data areas, wherein each employee profile data area corresponds to one of the employees;  
means for retrieving actual employment data for each of the employees, the actual employment data including employee contribution data and actual compensation data; [[and]]  
means for analyzing the compensation planning data corresponding to one or more employees using the contribution data corresponding to one or more employees[.];  
means for selecting a group of employees;  
means for calculating an aggregate compensation for the group;  
means for retrieving budget data corresponding to the group;  
means for determining a variance between the aggregate compensation and the budget data;

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means for selecting one of the employees from the group;  
means for revising compensation planning data corresponding to the selected employee;  
means for calculating a second aggregate compensation for the group in response to revising compensation planning data corresponding to the selected employee; and  
means for determining a second variance between the second aggregate compensation and the budget data.

9. (Currently Amended) The information handling system as described in claim 8 further comprising:  
means for identifying high contributing employees by analyzing employee performance data included in an employee profile data area corresponding to each employee;  
means for determining whether the planning factor data corresponding to the high contributing employees is accurate; and  
means for revising the planning factor data in response to the determination.
10. (Original) The information handling system as described in claim 8 further comprising:  
means for identifying an employee classification corresponding to one of the employees;  
means for retrieving benchmark compensation data from a nonvolatile storage device corresponding to the identified employee classification; and

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means for comparing the retrieved benchmark compensation with actual compensation data corresponding to the employee.

11. (Original) The information handling system as described in claim 10 wherein the benchmark compensation data is selected from a group consisting of regional compensation data and organizational compensation data.
12. (Cancelled)
13. (Cancelled)
14. (Currently Amended) A computer program product stored in a computer operable media for analyzing employee compensation, said computer program product comprising:  
means for receiving planning factor data from a user, the planning factor data corresponding to one or more employees and the planning factor data including compensation planning data;  
means for storing the planning factor data in employee profile data areas, wherein each employee profile data area corresponds to one of the employees;  
means for retrieving actual employment data for each of the employees, the actual employment data including employee contribution data and actual compensation data; [[and]]  
means for analyzing the compensation planning data corresponding to one or more employees using the contribution data corresponding to one or more employees[.];  
means for selecting a group of employees;

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means for calculating an aggregate compensation for the group;  
means for retrieving budget data corresponding to the group;  
means for determining a variance between the aggregate compensation and the budget data;  
means for selecting one of the employees from the group;  
means for revising compensation planning data corresponding to the selected employee;  
means for calculating a second aggregate compensation for the group in response to revising compensation planning data corresponding to the selected employee;  
and  
means for determining a second variance between the second aggregate compensation and the budget data.

15. (Currently Amended) The computer program product as described in claim 14 further comprising:

means for identifying high contributing employees by analyzing employee performance data included in an employee profile data area corresponding to each employee;

means for determining whether the planning factor data corresponding to the high contributing employees is accurate; and

means for revising the planning factor data in response to the determination.

16. (Original) The computer program product as described in claim 14 further comprising:

means for identifying an employee classification corresponding to one of the employees;

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means for retrieving benchmark compensation data from a nonvolatile storage device corresponding to the identified employee classification; and means for comparing the retrieved benchmark compensation with actual compensation data corresponding to the employee.

17. (Original) The computer program product as described in claim 16 wherein the benchmark compensation data is selected from a group consisting of regional compensation data and organizational compensation data.
18. (Cancelled)
19. (Cancelled)
20. (Original) The computer program product as described in claim 14 wherein the compensation planning data includes one or more from the group consisting of a salary amount, a stock option amount, and an award amount.